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THE
INDUSTRIAL TRAINING
OF
DESTITUTE CHILDREN.

BY
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LONDON:
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO. 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.
1885.



THE INDUSTRIAL TRAINING

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DESTITUTE CHILDREN.

I have tried on various occasions to bring before the country the pressing need of Social Reform. I have urged that the great danger to our country lay in the growth of a poor, miserable and degraded proletariat, living in close proximity to the wealthiest aristocracy the world has ever seen. I have tried to sketch the horrible condition in which great numbers of our countrymen lived, especially in London and the great seaport towns, and have attempted to show that the real hope of the future lay in rescuing the young from the wretched career to which their parents too often consigned them.

Since that time a flood of lurid light has been thrown upon the condition of "outcast London." The evidence taken on the dwellings of the poor, the disclosures of the supineness of the London Vestries, the half-starved condition of the children in many of our Board Schools—these and many other revelations have produced a painful impression of the rottenness of our social fabric.

It is no doubt quite possible to exaggerate the magnitude of the evil. I gladly admit that the bulk

of the nation has made wonderful progress both morally and materially in the last forty years. Yet I fear it must also be granted that there remains a large deposit of human misery in our midst, wholly untouched by the progress of the nation—just as poor, as corrupt, and as hopeless of improvement as at any previous period of our history. I do not feel at all sure that this deposit has not been increasing of late years: at all events the difficulty of earning a living has been growing in the metropolis. I believe that a larger proportion of its population is now on the verge of starvation than was the case ten years ago. The trade of this country has for several years lost its former elasticity, and the rapid increase of population adds to the strain of life, and renders it more difficult for the poor unskilled labourer to hold up his head.

Admitting all that is proved in Mr. Giffen's valuable paper on the progress of the working classes during the past fifty years, I contend that this improvement does not touch the great floating element of casual unskilled labour which abounds in our large towns, and especially in the metropolis. Indeed the very improvement in other sections of society makes it more intolerable that immense numbers of families should live in single rooms, as foul as pigsties, without the decencies or comforts of life, barely eking out a wretched subsistence on two or three days' casual labour per week, nearly half of which goes for the rent of the filthy dens they inhabit. Yet this is the condition in which multitudes of the people in London live, and the same holds good of Liverpool, Glasgow, and most of our large towns.

I am deeply convinced that the time is approaching when this seething mass of human misery will shake the social fabric, unless we grapple more earnestly with it than we have yet done, and my object in these remarks is to point out a new field in which the richest fruits may be reaped if we enter upon it with adequate courage.

In an article which I contributed to the *Nineteenth Century* in 1883, I dealt with the care of the children by the State, and pointed out how inadequate were our safeguards against parental neglect, and how much more drastic was the legislation of America and other countries on this subject. I also advocated the emigration of pauper children to the Colonies, under proper guarantees, and showed how we might thereby drain away much of the hereditary pauperism of this country. I now wish to advocate a system of *industrial training for the children of our destitute classes conducted in night schools up to the age of sixteen.*

I am aware that at first sight this will appear to some a startling proposition, but I believe that a decade will not elapse before it is as commonly admitted to be wise and politic as national elementary education is now.

In order to bring this vividly before the reader, let me depict the life of a London schoolboy in the low parts of the city. He is compelled to attend school, from five to twelve or thirteen years of age, for five hours a day. Careful inquiry proves that in these poor districts 25 per cent of the children come to school without breakfast, and have only a piece of dry bread, perhaps with some tea, for their dinner; their

physical stamina is unequal to even a moderate intellectual effort, and probably half the school-time is passed in a sort of comatose state, in which they can learn absolutely nothing. They then go home to their miserable dens, where too often a drunken father or a profligate mother makes all happiness or morality impossible. They herd together in a single room, where all ages and both sexes sleep, eat and dwell together. Hard as the school life of such children is, it is much better than living entirely "at home," if such words can be used of their domestic surroundings, and it is no doubt true, as Sir Lyon Playfair has shown, that the mortality of children of school-going age has much decreased, owing to their being less constantly in the foul atmosphere of their foetid slums. I thankfully admit that compulsory elementary education is the greatest factor yet known or tried for civilizing the youth of "outcast London."

But it is a very imperfect agency; it comes far short of securing a fair prospect of a respectable after-life. Let me sketch still farther the process of youthful development. No children will stay in such filthy dwellings a minute longer than they possibly can; and so they spend their evenings on the streets, hearing and seeing all that is vile and debasing. Fancy what a picture of human life must be formed in the mind of a child who is familiar with the harlot and the drunkard from infancy upwards, and looks on these as the normal development of humanity. Yet so it is in many parts of our great cities. How little chance is there that short Bible lessons—excellent as these are—will counteract the "object lessons" of human wickedness ever

floating before their eyes. But the moment of supreme danger comes after leaving school. The little half-grown child of twelve or thirteen, stunted in all but its precocious knowledge of vice, is left free to wander at will by day and night on the streets. The parents of this class as a rule follow no regular trade; they pick up an uncertain livelihood from the innumerable precarious employments of a large city; they have no power to apprentice their children to an honest trade; many of them have no ambition; they have never known anything better than the uncertain livings of the streets, and they are contented that their children should be as themselves. A great proportion of them spend every farthing they can spare on drink, and have less concern for their offspring than the brute creation. Need one wonder that the children of this class—and it is a very large one—should reproduce the likeness of their parents? A few years spent on the streets in what is called “hobjobbing,” virtually settles their future lot; it stamps upon them indelibly the features of the tramp, the pauper and the criminal; it feeds the horrible stream of fallen women which makes the streets of London hideous beyond those of any capital in Europe, and it prepares the way for a fresh crop of this baneful harvest in the next generation.*

For one of the gloomiest elements in the whole case

* “Year by year, from seventy to eighty thousand London children pass out of elementary schools; of these, possibly the half obtain *bond fide* occupation; as for the rest—the poorer part, inhabiting, too, the more densely populated quarters—there is nothing for them but the streets, and the almost certain life of a knave or a fool. It is probable that, every day, not less than seventy thousand boys and girls are actually ‘hob-jobbing about,’ utterly helpless, until they hob-job into gaols, penitentiaries, reformatories.”—Extract from “The Gaol Cradle, who rocks it?” By the Rev. Benjamin Waugh.

is the extraordinary rapidity with which this degraded population multiplies; the birth-rate is far higher in these low slums than in the respectable neighbourhoods. Little girls frequently become mothers, and I am told that it is not uncommon for women of twenty to have three or four children.* The responsibility of bringing human beings into existence seems not to cross the minds of these sunken creatures; that they cannot feed or clothe their children is no hindrance to matrimonial or other alliances; and were it not for the vast infantile mortality, the numbers of the destitute classes would double or treble every twenty-five years. It may be truly said that nothing but starvation prevents this portentous increase.

Now, the sad thing is that no charitable outlay, however vast, could cure this terrible evil. Were we to suppose, as some socialists seem to think, that the thrifty and industrious classes should be made responsible for keeping the thriftless in comfort, this class would multiply far faster than has ever been known before. Parents relieved of all responsibility would neglect their offspring more than ever, and the millions of pauperised wretches would multiply into tens of millions in the not distant future. No wealth could long stand such a drain: the nation would sink into a Serbonian bog, in which all virtue and manliness would perish. No relief is to be found in any remedy which does not aim at producing individual virtue and independence: the proletariat may strangle us unless

* The birth-rate in the prosperous district of Hampstead for the ten years 1871-80 was 24 per 1000 annually; whereas in the poor and miserable district of Whitechapel it was 36 per 1000, or just 50 per cent higher.

we teach it the same virtues which have elevated the other classes of society.

This leads me to describe more fully the scheme of reform I propose. It is, in short, an extension to all the destitute children of the land of the excellent system of industrial training which already obtains in the best of our district schools, in the Reformatory and Industrial schools, and in very many private institutions, such as Barnardo's admirable homes in the east of London. It is to give to the thousands what is now given to the tens and twenties of our youthful population—to give it them, not as a reward for juvenile crime, nor as a badge of pauperism, but as a necessary part of education, quite as necessary as "the three R's." It is to make the training of the hands no less than the training of the head a part of national education; it is to conceive of "education" as the fitting of a child for the duties of after-life, and, above all, for earning an honest livelihood.

Of course the *laissez-faire* school will say this is not the business of the State, just as they said fifty years ago that elementary education lay outside its province: but, if I am not mistaken, this objection will soon be brushed aside when the nation comes to see that we must either undertake this duty or risk anarchy in the future.

It is intolerable that millions of people should exist in our midst unable to live except on charity, because they have been taught in youth no means of livelihood. The little smattering of education got in our national schools by the children of this class is almost rubbed

off them in the critical years that succeed school life, it only enables them to read the *Police News*, the *Newgate Calendar*, and such like rubbish, which is the chief literature that circulates in the slums. One sometimes wonders whether this so-called "education" does not in the case of many only multiply their power for evil: the real education they most of all need is not given, viz. the habit of steady useful industry, the ability to turn their hands readily to any useful calling, and the power to fit themselves for a decent life either at home or in the colonies. The critical period of child-life is from twelve to sixteen; it is then that the habits are formed which determine its future; at that vital stage the child-population of the slums are prowling about the streets getting initiated into the arts of vice and crime.

The best career that is open to the boys afterwards is casual labour at the docks or warehouses—a field that is always glutted with hungry applicants; the best to which they can look forward in after life is three days' work per week, affording on an average about 15s per week of income, of which 5s goes for rent, with a squalid, dirty wife and family usually on the brink of starvation. The career of the artizan, with his 35s or 40s per week, is forbidden to the common labourer, for he can get no early training; the great colonial field is closed against him, for he has no money to emigrate with, and, if despatched by charity to the shores of Canada or Australia, he is looked upon as a nuisance by the colonists; he cannot handle tools, he knows nothing of farm labour, he has no foresight, self-control

or independence: the life of the streets and slums of "outcast London," or "squalid Liverpool," has washed out of him every element that goes to make a successful colonist.

And so it happens that while the flower of our population emigrate and build up prosperous fortunes at the Antipodes or across the Atlantic, the residuum remains behind, corrupting and being corrupted, like the sewage of the metropolis which remained floating at the mouth of the Thames last summer because there was not scour sufficient to propel it into the sea.

I can see no end to this vicious circle, unless the State provide for "labour education" as well as mental education in our public school system.*

These ideas are rapidly being carried into effect on the Continent, under the name of technical training; prodigious efforts are being made, especially by France, Germany and Switzerland, to cultivate the taste and talent of artizans, and they are extending them to a lower grade of schools, and in some places are requiring

* "A compulsory labour law, however undesirable in itself, is rendered absolutely necessary by varied and complicated causes, but by one chiefly—viz. the worthless character of many parents,—necessary as a protection to the State. What do the selfish, animalized parents know of parental responsibilities, or care for the use or abuse of youth, the solemn duties of citizens, the basis of society, the weal of the State? Yet all these things are involved in their action towards their children. Themselves living from hand to mouth, they feel that it is right to turn out their children, regardless of all future consequences, on the chance of their somehow picking up a copper or two, and it is amazing to see how many a family can, and do, live thus on nothing to do. Did not *their* parents act thus? Were not they themselves turned out, and have not *they* got along? To the possibility of his children growing up to be sleepy labourers, beer-house loungers, idle paupers, what sleepy labourer, beer-house lounge, idle pauper, ever gives a thought? And if it could arise on his stolid imagination, why should he be shocked at the vision? Everything depends on the medium through which the prospect is seen. His opinion—if opinion he has at all—is that everybody—husband, wife, and children—must 'fend' for themselves, and take their chance."—Extract from "The Gael Cradle, who rocks it?" By the Rev. Benjamin Waugh.

children to attend so-called "Continuation Schools" at night up to the age of sixteen. But none of these countries needs the precise thing that we require in Great Britain; they have not nearly so many neglected children, nor so large a residuum of drunken and depraved parents. With us the case is far more urgent: we have terrible arrears of neglect to overtake; we were the last of the civilized States to enforce national compulsory education, and we shall have to do double work for many years to get abreast of the more advanced nations.

What I should like to see—were it possible of attainment—would be the adoption of *manual training* as a part of all school education in this country. I should recommend that Eton as well as Seven Dials should have industrial education. No country in the world produces so many helpless people among the middle and upper classes as England does. An unwholesome contempt for hand labour runs through all "good society," as it is falsely called; and so it is that when families are left destitute, as frequently happens among our improvident gentlefolk, it is found that none of them can earn their bread; neither sons nor daughters can emigrate, for there is nothing they can do that is of any use in the busy and practical communities of the New World. I believe that in far more cases than is generally supposed "decayed" families in the upper and middle classes are supported by charity.

I much doubt, if an accurate census were taken of the self-supporting part of the population, whether it

would not be found that as large a proportion of the people who wear broad cloth are in reality paupers as of those who wear fustian. There could not be a greater social boon conferred on this country than by engrafting on the educational system universally the teaching of some manual trade.

I am aware, however, that so sweeping a change as this is not within the scope of practical politics, and so I confine my suggestions to the children of what may be roughly called the destitute or semi-pauper class. It will at once occur as a difficulty, that the State cannot undertake the invidious task of discriminating them. Destitution has many shades: the deserving poor sink by imperceptible gradations into the profligate poor; the skilled artizan often falls through intemperance into the lower stratum; many members of the educated professions sink through their own vices into the slums: where are we to draw the line? I admit that a reply must be given to this objection. I propose that the general rule be to require all children after leaving elementary schools (which is usually at twelve or thirteen) to attend night schools in the evening to receive manual training, *unless their parents or guardians can satisfy the inspector that they are usefully employed*. I would not propose that a child who is apprenticed to a trade, or even employed as an errand boy in a shop, should be compelled to attend, and girls who were urgently needed for household work at home could also be excused, or only required to attend on one or two nights a week. The real object should be to make the meshes of the net

fine enough to catch "the street children," those swarms of neglected juveniles whose parents can give no good account of them. It is impossible to estimate the number of this class, but I should not wonder if half a million, or one-tenth of the total number of school children, would be qualified for this wholesome discipline. And further, I have no doubt that as the immense advantages of this industrial training began to show themselves, many parents of a better class would be thankful to let their children share the benefit. It would only be needful to make provision in the first instance in considerable towns, say of over 10,000 population; the rural children do not need much training of this kind; they learn farm work in most cases, which is the best of all training. There would also be much less need of it in manufacturing towns, where the children enter the mills as half-timers: the scheme would mainly apply to London and the great seaport towns, and need not impose a heavy burden on the State. We have a magnificent supply of Board Schools ready prepared, where most of the training could be cheaply given in the evening.

I would suggest that the boys should be taught carpentry, tailoring, shoemaking, printing, &c.; the girls sewing, cooking, washing, and domestic economy as far as possible. Some of these branches could easily be carried on in the existing school-rooms without injuring the furniture; others might require a shed or some cheap structure to be added for the coarse work. It would not be needful to occupy every school; certain centres might be fixed upon within easy reach of the

children. The teaching of the boys might be given by skilled artizans, whose wages for two or three hours per evening would not be very high. I do not believe that the whole cost of training half a million children in this way need exceed half a million sterling per annum—say £1 per head; whereas pauperism and crime cost the State fifteen millions a year, and mostly spring from the neglected children of this class.

I predict that within a generation, if we adopt these recommendations, we shall have reduced this heavy tax immensely. A few years of such training would change the character of a boy's life. Physical labour, well directed and not overdone, is the truest recreation; there is nothing that boys are fonder of than learning handicrafts. When the taste is once formed, and the habit fixed, they may be left to take care of themselves. They will not often relapse into the indolent, hopeless life common to their class. A thousand avenues of useful employment will open up to them which are at present closed. They will find that they are welcome emigrants to every new country in the world.

Let those who doubt this pay a visit to Dr. Barnardo's homes, where 700 boys, rescued from the worst of the slums, are trained to a cheerful, industrious life. He will see there a series of workshops, full of busy young life, and a diffused element of health and happiness which is wonderful, considering the horrible condition from which the boys were taken. The half-time system prevails there, as in the best pauper and industrial schools. It is found that children can do just as much

head-work in the forenoon as if the whole of the day were so occupied; and the time given to manual work makes them far more healthy and happy.

I have no manner of doubt that in the poorer schools of the country the half-time system would answer far better than the existing one. The children of this class have but small mental capacity: three hours in the morning exhaust their little stock of nervous power, and the afternoon lessons are wearisome drudgery. The alternation of brisk physical work would make them far brighter and happier. I have carefully followed the discussion on over-pressure, and am convinced that great suffering is caused to a large class of ill-fed and weak children by the ridiculous attempt to force them into the same Procrustean bed with children of double their capacity. All this would disappear with the alternation of mental and physical exercise, and the school days of multitudes of children would become the happiest period of their lives.

I am aware that this suggestion goes beyond the scope of my previous remarks. My main object is to advocate *night labour schools*, after the period of school age is passed; and I don't suppose that the Government would so far change our present system as to adopt the half-time or alternative principle in existing schools. Yet I cannot forbear stating my opinion that it would be much better for many of our poor children to have a couple of hours daily of simple manual instruction in our day schools. It would be capital preparation for the night labour schools which are to follow them.

The main point I wish to enforce is that the State

should not let go its grasp of the child population without reasonable security against a relapse into pauperism, and indeed I may say in some cases into barbarism. I can imagine that on the part of many the objection will be raised that we shall create a great over-supply of skilled labour, that we shall flood the market with artizans and lower their wages. A similar objection was urged against the education of the masses fifteen years ago. It was said that the children of the poor would supplant the children of the gentle-folks in the educated professions. We did not listen to that ignoble argument; we did not close the portals of knowledge on the million, in order to keep a monopoly of the learned pursuits in the hands of a privileged class; and I am convinced we shall act in the same broad liberal spirit when it becomes a question of raising the lower tier of our population. We wish to open to them the portals of industry, as we have already opened the portals of knowledge, and no selfish fears of other classes must stand in the way of it. At one time there was a great outcry against industrial training in prisons and reformatories, because it was expected to interfere with the labour market outside; but that has now passed away, and so in time will the dread that Society will suffer because all the members of which it is composed are more capable of earning their bread.

It is more than probable that work may not be found at home for all this population that we propose to train; but as Greater Britain contains sixty times the area of Great Britain, and only one-third of its popu-

lation, there is ample room for them there, and this leads me to another branch of my argument.

The economical position of our country makes it imperative that we train our future citizens so that the surplus population may find homes in the thinly-peopled regions of the New world.

Lord Brabazon's article in the *Nineteenth Century*, on State-aided emigration, brought out this view most forcibly. He quoted from various writers, myself included, to show the tremendous problems we have to face owing to the rapid increase of our population. Permit me to recapitulate, in a few words, what I have written elsewhere on this subject, for it is at the root of the whole question.

This country, like all the settled and prosperous States of the world (France excepted), is confronted by a rapidly growing population; it has increased from $5\frac{1}{2}$ millions in the year 1700 to $10\frac{1}{2}$ millions in the year 1800, and is now (1884) 31 millions in Great Britain alone,* and will apparently be 36 or 37 millions by the end of this century, and over 120 millions by the end of next, if the same rate of increase be maintained. It is also to be noted that the rate of increase is steadily becoming more rapid, owing to the great saving of life caused by improved sanitary arrangements, superior medical science, and abundant provision for nursing the sick and poor. Up to the beginning of the eighteenth century the rate of increase was extremely slow in all European countries, ours included. War,

* I do not include the population of Ireland, which, owing to well known causes, is no larger than it was at the beginning of this century.

pestilence, and famine carried off a great portion of the people, and it is computed that the population of England only increased three millions in the 600 years after the Norman Conquest, or just about the increase of the last ten years. It has further to be added, that emigration was very small until the present century, and that the huge increase of this century, which will be three to four fold in Great Britain, is in spite of an emigration of several millions of our people. I see no reason why this process should be stayed in the next century, unless some national catastrophe occur. The death-rate is always falling, the birth-rate keeps up. Agencies for saving life are always increasing, and we ought, as prudent people, to provide against contingencies which are patent to the most careless observer.

We have further to face the fact that all this increase goes into our cities—the agricultural population is steadily decreasing: possibly this may be checked by changes in our land laws, but no changes in them can hinder arable land being turned into pasture where it pays better, nor can hinder labour-saving machinery being introduced. I believe that any relief that can be got from a more minute cultivation of the soil of this little island will not do much to change the course of events I have described. Our cities will keep growing larger and larger, and, I may add, more and more unmanageable. London has grown within this century from 1 to 5 millions of inhabitants, if we include the suburban area, and at the same rate of increase will reach twenty to thirty millions at the close of the next century. Let us remember that the world has never seen a city of more than two or three millions of people except this

gigantic metropolis of ours. Ancient Babylon and Rome never contained such multitudes as London already contains; and its growth is faster now than ever before in its history. In ten years another million will be added to "Greater London;" and when or how is this process to stop?

Again, let me point out that the whole increase of our population for many years past has been fed with foreign food: we grow less than we did twenty or thirty years ago. One-half the population of Great Britain is now fed with foreign food; soon it will be three-fourths; possibly by the end of next century seven-eighths. This is not a cheerful prospect; the world is without any previous example of such a case; there have been great cities living by commerce, such as Tyre, Carthage and Venice, but never a great nation except ourselves. It is hard to believe that we shall escape some fatal catastrophe unless we are wise in time, and spread our population over the unoccupied parts of the globe. It may be said that as long as we can manufacture for the world and import our food in exchange, we are as well off as if we grew it ourselves; but every man of business knows that it is becoming increasingly difficult to enlarge the outlets for our goods, as foreigners with one consent struggle to shut them out by high tariffs, while our colonies fast copy their example. I cannot believe that it is within the range of possibility that population can grow in this island as I have indicated without a desperate struggle for existence arising, in which our institutions and even civilization itself might perish.

We ought to do as a ship does when she sees a

storm approaching—reef our sails: we should prepare by fitting our people to use the wonderful safety-valve we possess in our vast colonial empire. We are indebted to Lord Brabazon for bringing before the public the question of State-aided emigration, but I confess I see great difficulties in the way of its adoption. Granted that by an arrangement with the colonies we might secure farms at an outlay—including passage money and temporary maintenance—of £100 per family, and that we shall have good security for repayment; it would require a million sterling to transplant 10,000 families of 50,000 souls. This would give no perceptible relief. We should need to operate on a far larger scale. These islands could comfortably part with ten times that number of people annually, and most of them would depend upon the Government if it once undertook this duty. We might be called upon to spend ten millions a year in this way, and as several years would elapse before repayment could be made, the State would soon incur an enormous pecuniary liability. But a greater difficulty remains. The demand for emigration would be made by the most useful and productive part of the population; at such time as this, when severe distress prevails, immense numbers of our best artizans would leave the country if tempted by such inviting proposals. We should encounter a scarcity of labour whenever trade revived, and the country would view with disfavour a depletion of its resources to be borne by those who remain behind. Besides, the Government would have to accept all able-bodied emigrants or reject all alike, for discrimination would be invidious and almost

impossible. There would be a great risk, besides, of attracting immigrants from the Continent, in the hope of sharing these splendid facilities for settling abroad. The very class we wish to get rid of would remain behind, like the sediment at the bottom of a well. The wretched pauperised masses that swarm in our large towns are unfit for emigration. If the Government tried to shunt them off on America or Canada, they would meet with the same reception they did last year when some Irish paupers were sent out. The unfortunate creatures would be returned on our hands, and we should only have raised a prejudice against all schemes of emigration. I do not wish to say that this plan may not have to be tried in some exceptional crisis—possibly we may be driven by dire necessity to adopt it; but I do say that it fails to relieve us of the crucial difficulty—how to rid ourselves of the useless and corrupting element in our cities.

Now, the plan I propose goes to the root of the matter; it undertakes to deodorise, so to speak, this foul humanity, it aims at turning into a productive and valuable commodity that which is now a wasteful and poisonous element in our social system. It does so at a very small cost, and by simply extending the educational lines we have already laid down. These boys and girls, well trained in industrial arts, would find their way without much difficulty into the Colonies or United States; or if State-aid had to be given, a very small amount would suffice; many of them would follow town occupations, and would not care to become farmers.

In conclusion, I wish to say a word or two about

girls. Undoubtedly the difficulty is greater with them than with boys; they cannot be taught the numerous trades that boys naturally take up. It is not easy in night schools to find appliances for household work which girls most need to learn; besides, they are required from a very early age to help their mothers at home.

But the fact remains, that while a mass of girlhood is going to ruin in London and our large towns from absence of training and want of honest occupation, there is extreme difficulty in finding a supply of properly trained servants. Multitudes of poor women are pinching themselves to live on 5s a week at slop-work, while mistresses cannot get cooks and housemaids at £20 or £30 per annum, with their food! It is a strange anomaly, yet so it is. I can only account for it by the want of any system for transforming the slatternly girl of the slums into the neat and tidy domestic servant. There is no way of bringing supply and demand together save a few benevolent institutions, which do not meet a tithe of the demand. Could not these night training schools do something to bridge over the chasm? Why could not cookery and housework form an essential part of a school girl's education? How much more important for the starving girlhood in the London slums to be fitted for domestic service than to know the heights of the Himalayas or the names of the Plantagenets! Surely there was some truth in the remark of the then Robert Lowe, when Rector of Edinburgh University, that British education was the worship of inutility! When shall we learn that the first necessity of a human being is to live, and only the second to have book-knowledge?

But another point remains to be noticed in respect of girls. There is a great preponderance of females in this country; marriage is impossible for many of them on this account; while in the colonies and the Western States of America there is an equal preponderance of men, and no colonists are so welcomed as respectable women accustomed to household work. Surely this is an additional reason for trying to qualify these poor girls for a useful life in the colonies, in place of the wretched existence to which they are too often doomed at home.

Finally, I would say that our whole conception of education must be more practical than it has hitherto been. It is all very well to aim at high attainments, but there is such a thing as "*propter vitam vivendi perdere causas.*" We may buy even gold too dear. There are large classes of our population to whom the prime necessity of life is to learn to work, and so to live. This is well expressed in a letter I have from one who thoroughly understands this question. "At present the unused manipulative power of the poor people is much what the unused brain power was before the Education Act. Education was once voluntary, now labour is. Brains were once useless, now hands are." What we want is to liberate that hand power which is going to waste, just as we have set free the brain power. There is a mine of potential wealth which lies beneath the surface. We must sink a shaft which will reach it; or, to change the metaphor, we must transmute this base metal into pure ore by the alchemy of wise and Christian statesmanship.

